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1997 Employee Town Halls

*Why do you
work for the City?*

*Can our organization stay
the way it is?*

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What needs to change?

*How can we
Improve?*

A summary of the conversation between
the City Manager and City employees.



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table of contents

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Letter from the City Manager | pps. 1-2 |
| Introduction | pps. 3-6 |
| 1. The Forum | |
| 2. Organization of the Report | |
| 3. Summary of Themes | |
| The Conversation | pps. 7-35 |
| 1. Why do you work here? | 7-9 |
| 2. What needs to change | |
| 3. How can we improve? | |
| Bureaucracy/Administrative Systems | 9 |
| Referrals | 11 |
| Council/Priorities | 11 |
| Citizen Involvement | 12 |
| Public Information | 13 |
| Organizational Environment/Culture | 13 |
| Accountability/Responsibility | 17 |
| Teams | 18 |
| Personnel Practices | 19 |
| Budget Process | 21 |
| Leadership/Management | 22 |
| Supervision | 24 |
| Employee Participation | 24 |
| Training | 24 |
| Communications | 25 |
| City-Manager Response: | 36 |
| Proposed Action Plan | |

letter from the City Manager

Dear City Employees:

First, I want to thank those of you who took time out of your workday to meet with your fellow employees and me to engage in conversation about our City—our community and our organization. This little booklet captures in your words what you said during our meetings. I also want to thank Bob Bailey, our hyperkinetic notetaker for compiling this booklet. Not every statement, question, or solution uttered during our 40 hours of conversation (twenty 2 hour sessions) is included, since there were many points made repeatedly, but a representative of every thought, perspective, and feeling has found its way into this booklet. At the end of the booklet are the actions I will commit to in response to what you have said. It is just a start.

I think the Town Halls were important. They were not easy for me to do, since we fortunately were able to reach enough level of candor in almost every session that some criticism, frustration, and pain surfaced, and there were occasions where I was the target of that criticism. I hope that you see that what was said is passed on into this booklet without filtering or worry about how others might read and interpret it. I believe that what was said by each speaker was offered as a way to make our City a better place. Our ability and willingness to speak the truth, as we each see it, and to listen, is the one indispensable prerequisite for making change of our organization possible. I believe we began that relationship in the Town Halls and am more than willing to risk criticism from outsiders and those who were not there, in exchange for your honesty and participation in helping identify the *changes* that will change our City for the better.

Now, *what have I learned?* First, that we have City employees who are intelligent, candid, and who want to do a good job and serve the community. There is, however, a great deal of frustration with our *systems*, in terms of how they help or hinder us in doing our jobs, serving the customer, or in their impact on our spirit and creativity. Second, there is more than enough responsibility to spread around for the condition of our organization and our City. Whether it is management or unions, supervisors or employees, the City Manager and the Council, or citizens in the community (the outspoken and the silent)—all play some part in where we are as a City organization, and that solutions to improve us as an organization and a community will require changes by all.

Fortunately, in every session we concluded with agreement that our organization *must* change. To be less bureaucratic, more responsible and responsive, less reactive, controlling, freer, more adventurous and innovative, less patriarchal but more

accountable. . . these themes repeatedly emerged. But how to make these changes? Our solutions were maybe not always as clear as our frustrations. But we have a number of suggestions from the Town Halls that I am committed to working on and which provide us with a beginning. These can only succeed, though, with your help and effort.

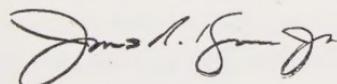
Finally, we all acknowledged that we did not get where we are overnight and that change will take time. In our conversations, we spoke in terms of five years as the horizon for beginning to see really significant change. We agreed that we would settle for progress along the way and a continuing commitment to openness and truth.

So where do we go from here? Despite the fashion, which can assume that working for the City is *easy*, we know it is not. Surely there are uneven commitments to service in our organization and disproportionate acceptance of workload or personal responsibility at times. This is frustrating and unfair for our citizens and it is frustrating and unfair for you as employees.

But our work is not easy, and whether as police or social workers, garbage collectors or nurses, building inspectors or policy analysts working on welfare reform issues, we take on the hard tasks of daily community living and planning for the future. And we do this *in the fishbowl*, with every action potentially monitored and criticized by our citizens a hundred times over, or "exposed" in the media. This is the fact of our work life and it is in the nature of the work we do. Many would never choose to do it, and to do it well is our challenge and duty.

Each day we may wrestle with many of the most difficult issues in society: crime, education, family life, health, jobs. And for those problems not so complex, we make those difficult too because we address them within the arena of democracy and diversity and differences and citizen activism. Because of this, it is easy to retreat, and to hole up, to be defensive, or bureaucratic, or overly cautious, or unresponsive. Our hope actually lies in the other direction—of opening, listening, candor, innovation, responsibility, commitment to the truth, and our willingness to always be of service.

With respect and in your service,



James Keene
City Manager

Introduction

1. THE FORUM

In January, 1997, City Manager Jim Keene announced that he would be conducting a series of Employee Town Halls. Between February 26 and June 27, 1997, over 700 employees met with him in twenty two-hour sessions. Every department participated. Sessions were scheduled at varied times and sites to accommodate as many employees as possible. Each session was generally a mix of employees across departments and work units to encourage a broader perspective and exchange of ideas.

The purpose of the Town Halls was to provide employees direct access to the City Manager and for the City Manager to hear directly from employees. A new forum for dialogue was established in the City -- one in which employees at large could comment freely on the organization and express their views on change. Employees were heard and comments recorded, with City Manager follow up expected to monitor progress.

A simple agenda was used for the Town Halls to frame conversation between employees and the City Manager. The focus of the dialogue, for each session, varied according to the interests of those present. Jim Keene facilitated the discussions and Assistant to the City Manager, Bob Bailey, recorded.

Opening remarks by the City Manager:

The City Manager offered preliminary remarks to help frame the discussions. He shared an organizational vision statement that included the premise: "Berkeley First: Community Well-Being is Our Reason for Being." He said that maintaining the status quo was not economically feasible over the next 5-10 years and encouraged employees to think about the need for better alignment between the individual employee, the City organization, and the community (concentric circle analogy). He concluded that the organization needed to change fundamentally to succeed in the future, and invited employees to examine these ideas, whether they opposed or supported the points.

The Conversation:

The meetings opened with a set of questions to give employees that gave employees an opportunity to: 1. State **why** they work for the City (what they value); 2. Explore **what** about the organization inhibits full personal satisfaction or effectiveness (what

gets in the way); and 3. identify **how** the situation can be improved (what needs to change and specific suggestions to address that).

Typical questions included:

- Why** do you work for the city? What brought you here? Why do you stay? What is it fulfilling? What gets in the way?
- What** needs to change? Can we stay the way we are? How would you rate the City? How would the public rate us? What does the future look like? What holds you back from the job being all you feel it should be?
- How** can we improve? What can we do differently? How can we become a more healthy organization? How can we move from where we are to where we want to be? What specific recommendations do you have that can make needed changes over the next 1-5 years? What should we focus on in the first year?

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report is in three parts: Introduction, The Conversation, and The City Manager's Response.

1. The Introduction includes the above explanation of how the town halls were conducted. What follows is a brief overview of themes that emerged from all the sessions. This summary is somewhat impressionistic and subjective, but is intended to convey the complexity and breadth of the views expressed by the participants, and highlight some points of convergence and difference.
2. The bulk of the report is devoted to The Conversation-- a representative sampling of the voices of the employees as they were recorded at the town halls. The material uses the "Why?", "What?", and "How?" questions to reflect the structure and flow of the dialogue. Sub-topics are to help organize the wide scope of ideas.
3. The report includes the City Manager response as a Proposed Action Plan. Here Mr. Keene identifies pending initiatives responsive to issues identified in the town halls. These initiatives can serve as benchmarks of progress in the coming year. They, of course, are not a complete City workplan, with all projects and Council priorities. They do, however, reflect much of the City Manager's current internal organizational focus as informed by employees' feedback from the Town Halls. It is, just a start...

3. SUMMARY OF THEMES

Below are my impressions of common themes that emerged from the wide range of perspectives voiced at the Town Halls, highlighting some of the differences and points of agreement. My intent is just to provide overview for "The Conversation" that follows.

1. Berkeley is a desirable place to live and work, but also a difficult place to work.
2. There is a certain paradox between Berkeley's progressive reputation and actual practice; between the ideal of community involvement and the reality of citizen participation; and between employees' desire to take initiative and the bureaucratic nature of organizational decision-making.
3. The organization is dysfunctional in many ways; problems with the inter-relationship of organization, Council, and public.
4. Positive change is possible, but will take time: The organization needs a clear sense of direction and needs to see visible signs of progress.
5. Pressures City organization faces now (re: public expectations; availability of resources) will likely continue and worsen in the future; but Berkeley's experiences are not unique in that regard; workforce not likely to expand while service demands don't abate.
6. Staff morale and confidence in management are real issues. Need to feel respected, or at least better understood, by the public; and better recognition/support from supervisors/managers.
7. Ability to plan and manage work compromised by poor training and supervision, ever changing priorities, cumbersome administrative support systems, bureaucratic authority structure.
8. Staff frustration with Council re: priority setting and ability to get work done.
9. Individual responsibility and employee job security need to be more balanced.
10. Union concerns for job security and fairness should not unduly inhibit individual initiative and personal responsibility.
11. Investments in the organization seen as essential.

12. More true collaboration within organization and partnering with community resources needed. Communication and trust issues to overcome along the way.
13. Acknowledgement that accountability and dispersal of responsibility poor throughout the organization.
14. Acceptance of reality of change - and necessity of change. Few advocates for status quo. General acceptance of the view that we can and should do better in terms of efficiency, customer service, etc.
15. A strong sense that the situation can improve with greater employee involvement and management support. Some skepticism and cynicism -- but not without hope. Some fear lack of follow through and continuity in leadership at City Manager level. Lack of continuity a real concern.
16. Change is necessary. For example:
 - Priorities need to be set and kept; need to learn to say NO
 - Need greater emphasis on service/responsiveness to the public
 - Need to inform public better about what we do and how to access services
 - Need more open communication within organization, and with the public
 - Need to improve accountability at all levels; lack performance standards
 - Need more consistency in leadership at the top.
 - Current referral system is counter-productive; too much driven by "squeaky wheels"
 - Community involvement positive and negative
 - Training and investment approach with workforce needed
 - Berkeley is very bureaucratic; too rule-bound; discourages initiative, risk-taking; need more freedom, flexibility, administrative support systems changes, better use of technology, greater dispersal of responsibility, better quality management and supervision
 - Need to be more "proactive"; anticipate needs and plan accordingly, but don't over plan; need less process and more follow through and evaluation
 - Need to be more efficient
 - Need to be in position where City staff can be competitive
 - Need greater employee participation and involvement in decision-making and change process
 - Personnel practices are too restrictive; rigid job classifications and disruptive "bumping" policy and ineffective performance evaluations
 - Development of teams not adequately supported

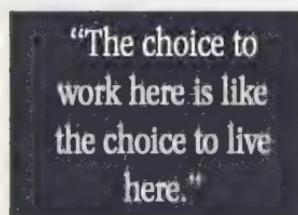
II. The Conversation

question 1: "why are you working for the city of berkeley?"

- To earn a decent living and serve the community
- Good pay and benefits
- Like serving the community I live in. It's my community and I love it.
- Caring place - e.g., health department
- Interesting, stimulating, challenging, dynamic, not boring
- Compassionate, creative, intelligent
- Challenging; never a dull moment
- Small size attractive
- Sense of community
- Mini-world; diversity
- Challenge of citizen involvement
- Been here for 33 years; good place to work; family oriented; small enough to feel "do-able"; we're seen as role models/progressive in the state
- Came here four years ago for career advancement, to turn around Environmental Health Services division that was floundering; having some success
- Well paid for what I do; I like the diversity in the City of Berkeley; we have a little of everything; been in 10,000 homes -- I like being able to say "I work for you"; It's a wonderful experience
- Even if I could get a raise elsewhere, I'm staying... I don't want to play the rookie game anymore
- Came for one year; been here 20 years; promotion opportunity; chance to develop a program. (Child Watch)
- Live in Berkeley; would rather work here than anywhere else; pays better, better benefits
- As a Public Health Nurse, unparalleled opportunities in my job; live in Berkeley, though perhaps it makes me too accessible
- Attracted to senior services; Berkeley invested in senior programs; fairer wages for workers

"I like the diversity of Berkeley; we have a little of everything... I like to be able to say 'I work for you'"

- Late 60's - it was exciting; lot happening; fun; it's still fun, tho' less adventure; fiscal pressures take away some of that; there's hope...
- Enjoy providing the level of services that Berkeley provides; a chance to work on policies strongly believe in personally (tho' for two years transferred away from that work)
- Get a sense here that you are doing something important
- The choice to work here is like the choice to live here. It's not like other cities; real bureaucracy; interesting; controversial; creative; hard to leave; lots of potential... Hope that is the reason I'm staying here
- As a landscape gardener, I like the community interaction; designing for the person not the masses; interacting with the people I am designing for; and immediate feedback.
- Berkeley unique in having its own Mental Health department, outreach to homeless, etc.
- I believe in the program I work for (first); I stay because pay and the benefits are better than in non-profit organization
- 23 years with the City; staying here because of salary and benefits
- I stay because of HHS as a department, and leadership there, and because I believe things can change
- I'm a resident, went to school here, past PTA president, etc. etc. I love this community; this is a village - accessible neighborhoods
- UC graduate; saw as dynamic, exciting community to work in; optimistic things will improve, tho' generally satisfied; looking for and open to change
- Law enforcement attraction; social upheaval (of 60'/70's); chance to address from within and be of service; and now less focus on enforcement and more on working with the community-[BPD]
- Saw Berkeley as place that valued community, and openness to alternative and different ways to serve the community - [HHS/MH]
- I'm a people person, and this is a people place
- Family oriented City organization (e.g., kids at work OK)
- As a parent, need the health and dental benefits
- The City takes care of me and I take care of the City
- Love Berkeley for it's history, uniqueness, potential, progressiveness



- Employees with the City of Berkeley are a “unique set”; more human; e.g. Police attitudes are very different here than in Oakland, Richmond, etc.; Open to more reasonable discussion
- Excellent benefits - even if part-time, get full coverage; that’s “worth their weight in gold”
- Work with Mental Health department - I like that it’s small enough to get to know people -- not a conveyor belt like the County/State -- not impersonal
- Have good relations with many private mental health agencies/providers in Berkeley; scale feels manageable
- Been here 7 months (Parking Citations) people support what I do – mostly African-American peers, (and me as a minority) -- good supervision -- appreciate the diversity
- Greatest job I’ve ever had; there are frustrations … but overall, these frustrations are minor and I wouldn’t work anywhere else.

The Conversation

question2: “what needs to change?”

bureaucracy/administrative systems

- Difficult because of the bureaucracy; go too far with “checks and balances”; sometimes feels like intentional “bottlenecks”
- I read “Stewardship”; we’re a bad Soviet bureaucracy.
- Paradigm of mistrust/fear/authority undermined/lack of support
- We generate stupid rules in response to single situations
- “Peter Principle” in the City
- Extremely rules bound
- Service disconnect between progressiveness of community and regressiveness of government/City bureaucracy
- If City was a private entity, would have been out of business a long time ago
- Lots of vision here but policies/procedures contradict what we’re trying to accomplish

“Outrageous
bureaucracy”

- Berkeley “known for” a lot -- but when we try to do things, there are roadblocks; Makes the dysfunction of the organization distressing
- Overwhelmed with our process
- Difficult to get things done
- Closed, not open to change
- Outrageous bureaucracy
- Winding my way through the maze
- There may be a City Manager inclination to openness, but the process isn’t there
- Can’t continue to do business as usual...[City] procurement process is foolish and wasteful
- Lack of autonomy
- Need to be more efficient
- Too much duplication of services (City, County, State)
- We’re effective, but not efficient
- Too much management; just let us do our jobs!
- We have more bureaucracy than HUD!; Too much power – tripping
- Many businesses won’t do work for the City of Berkeley because we don’t pay bills on time
- Complaints about our bills for services, too
- Work in public works customer service department - City bought a system for tracking citizen requests, etc. that cost a great deal of money - and it doesn’t meet our needs.... for example date entry is too difficult, so consequently work reports of what we’ve really done are inaccurate.
- We’re going to [new computer/data system] “DMS -- Doesn’t mean sh_ _”; can’t get anything out of the computer
- As systems analyst with Information Systems -- lack of resources -- can’t implement systems improvements that would like to because scale not sufficient to do so (cost-wise); we have all the complexity of larger agencies without the resources needed to support.
- Wonderful goals for community and organization; in the process of trying to do it, the City loses sight [of the goals] and does contradictory things that defeat it
- I worked in Orange County -very conservative -- but more progressive re: technology than City of Berkeley

- Have management analysts doing very elaborately what would be done by clerk in a healthy organization.
- Plenty of work; terrible systems.
- City Manager: "Is there general agreement that the organization needs to be freer; less rules; training investments; excellence?" Response: YES!

referrals

- "Referrals" are setting priorities, and just create the next "squeaky wheel"; need a fairer priority system
- Now getting same request from so many different perspectives -- cannot bring to closure -- more and more just getting to P.R. situation; "one piece of paper comes back 5 times"
- Too much time is spent on the squeaky wheels and the quiet ones lose out ("Their time never comes")
- "Referral system is killing us"
- Don't need to micro-respond to everything that comes out of the Council or to every citizen request
- Feels like the starting assumption is that staff are wrong; staff have to prove otherwise; not just told to make a change, but then have to show they've done so; not trusting staff to be responsible
- Referrals spotlight and put pressure on staff to satisfy complainants and that side-steps existing process
- It shouldn't matter who gets a ticket in the city; let the person plead their case, go through the process, and pay their way the same as anyone else

"Too much time is spent on
squeaky wheels and the quiet
ones lose out-- their time never
comes"

council/priorities

- Have a clearer sense of what public wants for their dollar
- City is not listening to community when it has expressed its desires (e.g., Measure O); that contributes to citizen apathy; and as City employee, get caught in the middle
- Too many programs at the expense of essential services; results in "cardboard

- programs" - lack sufficient resources (e.g., HAZMAT)
- HAZMAT hot a couple years ago, and since not, and funding down
- Gap between Council expectations and reality (ex: earthquake preparedness)
- In '64- didn't have as many services, but more alignment with the community; now I am seeing more stress on the poor; less support systems to families-- so more demands are placed on the City/County to solve these problems; if we had universal health care, most of the need for our special services would be eliminated
- Need for consistent Council expectations re: workplan [Planning and Development]; policy makers need to avoid shifting priorities
- Expectation that every social problem requires a new program or policy; keep re-defining programs, but recycling same work; results in everyone reporting to everyone, etc.
- City listens to the same citizens over and over again
- Learn to say NO!
- We do need leadership to call it the way it is.
Can't let bullies produce the antithesis of democracy; needs to feel supported by Council
- With disaster preparedness - big issue - needs to be well thought out;
- What's priority - EMS? Disaster Preparedness? HAZMAT?; decide what's priority versus trying to do everything with a new program every year
- 50% of time people express satisfaction with service, etc.; but we have the worst fire prevention program; people pay for good inspections and don't get them; understaffed; not automated, etc.
- If we were more efficient, we could save money; (ex. alcohol/ substance abuse contributes to homelessness); need to find treatment, even tho' environment chilly towards more social services right now
- “Fast food mentality”; no understanding of what it takes to do something
- City can't distinguish between three nuts and 50 people with real grievances

**"Decide what's priority
versus trying to do
everything"**

citizen involvement

- Everyone wants the curb painted red, but on the other side of the street
- People getting more knowledgeable about services and that affects demand.

- We're really buried in public process. Planning [Dept.] is really big to deal with all the ways they are being pulled. The irony is that, in my experience, the number and extent of [citizen] involvement is not great; there is no reconciliation of different interests; nobody really loses in Berkeley; squeaky wheels drive the process, despite the interests of the other 98%; very small vocal groups are able to intimidate the Council; any vocal minority here can get things done that would not be done in any other city.
- Citizen perceptions are inconsistent - ex. northeast vs. southwest Berkeley both feel ignored, depending on the issue
- City highly participatory and fickle - staff often in an untenable position: "hurry up and stop"[e.g., parking enforcement]
- Citizen expectations are extreme, as they are paying high taxes/fees; Some get way more than their share of our time. Some citizens 'work' every department with their complaints.
- Some special interests get far more attention than they should - to the detriment of others, especially with regulatory legislation, which then takes a great deal of our time [to implement]

"Nobody really loses in Berkeley; squeaky wheels drive the process"

public information

- City of Berkeley in the past was on the cutting edge of change - but today populace needs a reality check.
- Public education issue: if public aware [that illegal dumping costs the City]-- would residents really accept the behavior (ex: leaving couch on the street)?
- People [in neighborhoods] willing to talk to us - but they don't know about services that we do
- Need a 'PR' blitz by top management
- We do a bad job marketing the City

"We do a bad job marketing the city"

organizational environment/culture

- Sometimes City doesn't "walk the talk" (ex: affordable housing); in Berkeley , big deal to build two-three affordable units yet Livermore is

building hundreds!

- When I hear the President suggest government employ those coming off welfare, what does that say re: us? We are just seen as a step above welfare?
- Union not treated as an asset/only as a liability
- Everyone is trying to go to the express line for everything; everyone is in a hurry
- Feel less connected with City (organization), than I do with the community itself
- Unless you wear a uniform, I don't know who you are
- [Since entering] public service, public and people in public service starting to feel differently re: public service; I thought by coming to Berkeley, I would recapture initial feelings re: public service, but in some way, that is more "on the surface" appearance than reality
- 27 years; started as a student; past strike [BFD] a horrible experience; if I could change one thing - I would want more line staff/management cooperation (ex. in Milpitas—both lunch together); respect must be earned --and feel BFD does that with the community daily
- [My spouse] works for the County - it is far worse than the City of Berkeley
- [Worked for a] private company; well-organized; mission and goals on business card, not 30 pages (HHS)... personnel problems dealt with more efficiently and people leave sooner
- We often get stuck at the problem identification stage without applying solutions
- I'd like to see us more genuinely self-critical; ex: use of current performance evaluation forms; reticence to accept "needs improvements" and that equally important to "exceeds requirements;" too little willing to look at ourselves; 5th floor is not the source of all the problems.
- “Tenure” mentality; hard to lay off
- Ambiguity re: what is ‘Quality’
- Expectations have changed -- and technology accelerating changes (with increased volume and pace of work, despite promises that technology would ease work).
- In this anxious environment, the foundation of trust and maintenance is critical.
- A lot of employees are unhappy [with evaluations], but unequal work worsens the bad feelings.
- “People spend inordinate amount of time shifting gears” when juggling many different things.

**"Berkeley creates management chaos;
can't be all things to all people."**

- Different than private sector; that doesn't have to provide multiple services; public thinks they own you.
- Hard place to stay on track
- State of volatility
- Little planning in the City
- City is crisis driven
- We just "patch things up," don't do it right
- Impression of people outside of Berkeley: don't see any changes since the 60's
- Many came to the City of Berkeley feeling excited re: its progressiveness; in fact it's close-minded and reactionary re: workers
- PW "Committees for Change": supervisors/managers just telling workers why nothing can change, and co-workers asking "what are you doing in there?" There's no change.
- It's a shame- ["Committees for Change"] is a great concept; as a union felt had to have real consensus; go with all 14 of Deming's principles or it's a waste of time; don't water down.
- We re-invent the wheel a lot here; look at experience of others (ex: Fremont); avoid making everything a big project.
- We have a lot of visionaries/idealists/big dreamers, but no standards; everyone wants to build their own "big dreams;" we're like a cat chasing its tail and no standards
- Don't feel connected with the rest of the organization and community; don't feel like I can just walk up to another department and ask for assistance
- Concerned about changes at State level; and possible trend to Public Works, etc. exclusively in the future; and anxious about a more regional approach for social services
- Track what's comes out of committees; what was in fact implemented
- College town - socially oriented but also lot of conservatism (dichotomy)
- People do a good job based on their own self-respect, and not much else
- Lack of follow through is the only consistent thing in the City
- Berkeley creates management chaos; can't be all things to all people

"We have a lot of visionaries/idealists/big dreamers, but no standards. Everyone wants to build their own 'big dreams;' we're like a cat chasing its tail."

**"Politics
more valued
than
management"**

- We're trying too much to accommodate everyone
- Need to have enough time to implement and do things right to be successful
- Too often we rush new things; and too short a time for feedback/evaluation; results in negative outcomes
- People distance themselves to not be part of what they perceive as a dysfunctional organization
- We're stuck in 1972... holding onto ideas from then and assume those are still progressive today
- Public expectations about service remain same as 5-10 years ago, despite staff being so busy [per cutbacks]; public increasingly frustrated; adds to employee stress level
- I've lived in the City over 20 years, and worked with the City (mental health) for over 15 yrs; I feel like we're a grand experiment, dealing with differences in a creative way, but I feel demoralized [per hiring "freeze"; difficulty getting supplies; inadequate staff parking; etc.]
- I worked 15 yrs. in San Francisco and 4 yrs. with the City of Berkeley; (and born in Berkeley, too); I liked the private sector better; [The City] is definitely not a team; people don't respect one another...Berkeley always a little nutty and that's one of the nice things about it, but working for Berkeley is even nuttier"
- Came as a temporary employee, worked for 3 different departments; continually hear "I don't stuff envelopes, and I don't make phone calls"; others outside will do what it takes to keep their job; some get too comfortable in their jobs here
- Work environment so different than other cities; not professional; too many employees too loose in attitudes, work habits, don't care
- Need to make ourselves better , regardless of whether there's [more] money
- Change is going to happen, but we're reactionary; no planning, no new ideas
- Break the cycle by looking at the experience of other cities and then stick to recommendations for change
- Conservative about radical innovation
- "Berkeley is like ice cream -- You can't take too much of it."
- Politics more valued than management, development and planning
- Public safety personnel unfairly seen [by rest of the organization] as sacred cows
- Few incentives, if any, to take risks, reframe the system, be entrepreneurial; seniority system undermines that

"We're a bunch of sub-cities, feuding warlords"

- Environment doesn't support new ideas
- Our practice isn't as good as our theory
- The lack of civility in Berkeley is palpable -
- No clear way for the staff and Council to relate/behave
- What happened to the threads that tied us together; we're a bunch of sub-cities, feuding warlords
- An incredible amount of staff time is spent responding to very vocal citizens, out of proportion to the problem...and that is the fault of the organization. The result is we operate in crisis mode.
- Polarization between employees and citizens; problem of false expectations
- Council is meddling in management...and some employees invite that!
- Need to recognize [we are] in uncertainty; see enormous opportunities [HHS], but difficult to look forward and plan for that; with [constraints] of space by staying in City Hall, losing great opportunities
- Need a pervasive attitude that demands excellence and rewards that
- This is not the best organization I've seen. I know we can do better around here.
- A lot of what we do is purely process oriented
- City Manager: "Are we very honest in this organization?" Response: No, we are very political.

"Environment doesn't support new ideas; our practice isn't as good as our theory."

accountability/responsibility

- Difficult to assess what's working, who is contributing
- Management/supervisor needs to have responsibility to evaluate/hold people accountable
- Need balance between empowerment and accountability; especially within teams; project management
- Job protection/unions important--but need to hold people accountable
- I lose authorship when I write for someone else's signature - which reinforces that I am not responsible; involve employees at line level; that's in part what you're doing here -- and that gives new hope
- Responsibilities and procedures of different departments are not always clear and that effects referrals to citizens (e.g., HHS/Environmental Protection vs Toxics;

- Public Safety vs. Animal Services); “It’s like sending people into the void”
- Fear of losing job results in less willingness to make decisions
 - No place for “militaristic” supervision/management; ex. critical intersection signal out - workers handled it well completely on their own without direction
 - That was a good description of employees taking ownership for their jobs; if all employees changed to that mind set could be pro-active
 - I came [to Town Hall] with some cynicism -- [but] ideas of risk-taking, growing in jobs, taking responsibility, I agree with (vs. bureaucracy).
 - [Too often] we just invoke the chain of command, with no direction, and so things don’t get done; this is seen by and frustrates residents; we need fewer people with suits thinking about what to do, and more guys with trucks getting it done; I was a [Berkeley] resident and moved because of this
 - Needs to be more accountability
 - Lack of accountability
 - Don’t have standards for performance
 - Lack of personal responsibility by citizens and staff
 - Until there is real accountability, there will be no change
 - My experience in my home town (not Berkeley) is I get a name when I call to know who’s responsibility it is to take care of my problem.”

“I lose authorship when I write for someone else’s signature- which reinforces that I am not responsible.”

teams

- There needs to be a better team effort with management and line workers...Be clearer about priorities and customer service.
- Need to work more in teams, project focus, with peers and less hierarchy
- There are problems of teamwork within work units and across/between departments, but each has different issues
- Need team concept; workers empowered to do the job
- We don’t work as a unit, respecting the needs of other departments
- Lip service regarding teams and teamwork is demoralizing

“We need team concept; workers empowered to do the job.”

-Too rigid job classifications (re: tasks willing to do); hard to develop teamwork in that atmosphere (despite “other duties as assigned” language in job specifications)

personnel practices

-Performance evaluation waste of time (except during probation period) and that contributes to “too loose” atmosphere

-Agree that's a problem and creates real big morale problem

-Lack of protection/ “risk management” for employees;
ex: for blood-born pathogens

-Shuffling bad employees between departments --
instead of taking care of the problem themselves

-[From] my experience - tried to dismiss someone for non-performance; it takes so much time; have to step up as a manager to do so. It's a union issue. It needs to change.

-We're putting people in places they don't want to be (per bumping, etc.); disservice to employee and customer

-I'm not happy now - co-worker out; 6 different “temps” in one year; getting someone from transfer list (per no lay-off policy) who doesn't know anything about the job; uncertainty re: medical status. etc.

-Most people at COB want to do a good job - given limits of resources available to them - [but] performance evaluations don't help the employee do a good job

-Vacancies are difficult to fill (so disincentive to discipline); takes follow through at all levels; no certainty in outcomes - and risks of damaging other necessary relationships; need to overcome fear of retaliation

-Private sector wouldn't tolerate the lack of disciplinary action that happens here - as some employees take advantage of time off/workers compensation, etc. - bad for morale of others - others are left with a larger workload

-It would be great if there were more provisions for employees hurt on the job (ex: library/metacarple syndrome); placement in other jobs to keep contributing (vs. long term disability, etc); allowing more flexibility - with reduced work hours/job change, etc.; relates to lack of sufficient risk management

-If we don't do our job, others will get it (outside contractors)

“Limited to job classification because the union says you have to; Too rigid - no room for leeway, shouldn't prevent employees who want to do more.”

- Job classification can stymie creativity/restrictive
- Concerned about contracting out
- Discouraged from acting “out of classification”
- Lot of us here in spite of management/ supervisors/personnel; Personnel no longer an employee advocate-
- Want more commitment to diversity and upward mobility for minorities
- Stuck in job classification; live and work in Berkeley for 14 years; can’t move up in the City; and I could be a better employee if I was allowed to come out with my ideas more; other choice, of expanding duties is not readily available
- Workers compensation situation has worsened; “Get hurt nowadays, it’s like terrorism”; people working hurt; hard to feel proud about that; and can’t just leave (after 27 years)
- We’ve created a situation where to get ahead, you need to be a supervisor; resulted in the inflation in supervisory positions; a lot of that supervision is not necessary - and may not be using the professional expertise of supervisors (which are more valuable than the supervision) (ex: sign-offs nit-picking on memos for CM signature); make it more of a professional organization
- I believe in employee empowerment; has to be “the truth” -- to let everyone run their department (not just think re: job classifications)
- Seems safer [to work for the City] -- but opportunities for movement/advancement are not there (especially with the “freeze” on vacant positions)
- Retraining new people a problem; too inefficient; would prefer a new fresh person from outside the City; [Vacancy - bumping - training - bumping (cycle)]
- Frustration, I am not allowed to work at level I get paid at (others are paid more and doing comparable work); not fully utilizing what I am trained in (e.g. computers)
- Limited to job classification because the union says you have to; too rigid - no room for leeway, shouldn’t prevent employees who want to, to do more (vs. need to protect those who might be dumped on by supervisors unfairly)
- I’m a graduate of an internship -- developed skills and experience - but still ruled ineligible for job classification due to the lack of a formal degree
- Been here 30 years; and have seen a lot of change; instead of being advanced per experience, MQ’s going up instead and requiring a college degree

“You get a promotion for good work, but then you get bumped out of higher classification due to low seniority. This is crazy”

- 6-18 months to replace staff vacancies; by time new person comes in, without training/orientation, make mistakes trying to catch up, and the problem gets compounded
- I came to the City 6 years ago...but have been in 5 different departments [per bumping/budget cuts]; should be able to stay where you want to be, where you've developed a rapport with the community, etc.; look at effects of bumping or departments and community not just at dollars and cents.
- Promotions for good work - but then you get bumped as low seniority in higher job classification - this is crazy - it needs to be changed
- City should support its own employees to remain competitive
- Need structural change: address the inflexibility of the personnel system; need to move people around so skills can be used better; personnel system and union relationships inhibit
- I don't like the "bumping" [policy] -- creates pressure every year regardless of how well you are doing in your current job - makes you feel insecure - and [de-values] the job you are doing (if someone who knows nothing about your job can bump you out)
- Should have better equivalents for education with experience and increase flexibility that way
- Not fair to ask if we stick with patriarchy over teams; question should be what works best
- No real stability until you have enough years of service (10 years); shouldn't have side-effect of bumping someone who is competent and replacing with someone who is not
- Need to curb use of temps (especially from temp agencies); when dept. heads like a temp they find ways to extend them (without offering position to a City employee)
- I want to be proud of the City's dedication to serving the community - but City does not treat employees with respect; many leave; working part-timers like slaves, etc.

"I want to be proud of the City's dedication to serving the community- but the City does not treat many hardworking employees with respect; many leave."

budget process

- [Budget] cuts don't really get rid of people - just bump them around
- Each budget - people get cycled through; people come with reputations - [budget]

used to pass on personnel problems

- Short-term ad hoc decisions made on staffing structure to try to manage/avoid “bumping” situations
- Been here 8-9 years; quality of our service has diminished; clerical support cutbacks affecting management and overall quality of services; managers are not understanding impact of cuts/choices they’re making
- Okay to sheer the sheep, but not until it bleeds.
- Back to dire fiscal picture: As workers, feels like management wants to downsize; we feel we need more efficiency; feels like some sort of collusion.
- Can’t keep funding new projects by moving money around
- Program Inventory - good exercise; communicated services; seemed on track to identify what we’re doing well and to set priorities...but it went away
- Managers spend too much time protecting their budget (their piece of the pie) disconnected from workers
- Take an investment perspective
- Cut the fat; we’re top heavy
- Budget process produces a lot of mistrust
- Billing/revenue problems--money not coming back for services (ex: electrical work)
- Budget process drives the organization without meaningful employee involvement
- Investing in the workforce and redistributing resources can reduce future costs
- Short planning horizon, with Council’s [short term perspective]
- If a department streamlines and saves money, the department [now] gets punished and is not allowed to use the savings on other department priorities
- Need resources to generate additional City business (ex: refuse collection)
- Refuse Fund being hit by other PW Divisions
- How we approach change is a problem -- confusion -- need vision, master plan, to see down the road what community needs

“How we approach change is a problem-- confusion-- need vision, master plan, to see down the road, what the community needs.”

leadership/management

- Need management training; promote to management without training
- Management by walking around important; can’t “connect” just

while trying to problem solve

- [With] changing management - managers just impose change that makes them look good (or per their own ego's or personal preferences)
- Relationship between City Manager and Council key; need to be able to say what's do-able; "just say no"
- I don't see my department head adequately trained to run a \$15 million operation. How do you get all the necessary administrative/budget skills coming up through the ranks?
- Department Heads need inter-personal skills; relate to your people
- If you're not management, you're not heard
- Street cleaning: bittersweet in my job-- I like what I do--but feels like management feels my job is to make their jobs easier
- Came from a poor country to USA - heaven lasted for 3 days; when get hired, right away feels like management trying to violate/get rid of me; have worked around the world and never felt like this - I'm pissed
- [Managers] say it's a new day -- but the only thing that's new is them -- they don't know what we're doing out there on the streets
- More workers would buy-in if immediately stopped the practices where people feel threatened if they speak up. If managers don't change, remove them; if you're jamming up the freeway, you shouldn't be behind the wheel
- Flavor of the month management
- Every time there's a change in administration good programs are dropped (ex. internship program)
- Need the big picture
- Some [managers] don't take the initiative because they have been burned in the past
- Need consistency at the top by the City Council and City Manager
- Have a global vision, so if we contract out we have a transition plan
- Need management to become leaders
- We're not reaching deep enough into the organization to solve our problems...don't feel there's enough support at the top...feel staff efforts trivialized
- Lack of employee respect; unfairly judged by "superiors," including by staff in [City Manager's] office

"There is an administrative
'ivory tower' here in the
City of Berkeley."

-There is an administrative “ivory tower” here in the City of Berkeley

supervision

-Need better equipment replacement decisions

-Attitude towards us [by some supervisors]: You’re lucky to have a job.; discouraging; lose morale; don’t feel can speak up

-There needs to be nurturing; help you be the best you can

be, and give tools to do so

-[Re: Saving money] --My
supervisors response: “you

“Supervisors are like the emperor
‘wearing no clothes.’”

get your paycheck, don’t worry about it!”

-Shouldn’t just be bashing management -- but it’s like “emperor wearing no clothes” --supervisors don’t realize they don’t really know what’s going on -

-They need to be willing to stop, turn around, ask what employees think!

-Supervisors need to know how to develop employees and they don’t

employee participation

-Not asked re: what I think on the job

-Need greater involvement at the bottom [of the organization]

-Recommendations from the line staff get stifled

- See lot of poor planning in equipment/parts procurement - without getting input from workers who use the equipment.

- Nobody listens to employees - my boss: “I don’t want to hear it”

- I was on duty [during the 1989 earthquake]; yet when we had the earthquake drill, nobody asked me about my experience for input in planning;

line workers are more likely to be in the field in reality, and need to be involved

“Not asked regarding what I
think on the job”

training

-Training: Some are in positions with inadequate training; others have training and

are underutilized

- Part of the problem is the quality of supervision; supervisors need to know how to develop staff and employees, and they don't; need help setting goals; need basic "supervisory training 101"
- Frustration if poorly supervised and that person needs training and they aren't going anywhere -- they block your promotion opportunity

communications

- Need more open communication -- so we can say how we feel re: things etc.-- to be more honest; need this to value employees more
- Fire department isolated from the rest of the organization - not on the computer network
- Need better feedback from the community to know if we're meeting our mission
- We spend a lot of time with people who really are crazy; we need to share information about how to deal effectively with these specific individuals
- Voice mail probably frustrates public/no personal contact; a major pain in the a__ for people over 70!
- Communications poor; feel looked down upon by the organization and the public (ex: parking enforcement)
- Managers always say the door is open -- but it's always locked as those in the chain [of command] say No!
- Feel like I'm going to another country when I go to City Hall; I don't feel a lot of communication
- Not all connected to [computer] Network
- Information to outlying departments and work units is really bad; supervisors don't want to give information to employees
- Been with the City for 20 years ; saw City Managers come and go; the City goes through highs and lows, mostly lows; now I work with 1600 low income homes - see great need to get information out to poor people re: City services/help available
- Don't want City Hall to still feel like going to the "DMV"
- [Answering] machines frustrating connection with clients; customers not getting the service they deserve; machine substitute for not enough staff.

"Feel like I'm going to another country when I go to City Hall; I don't feel a lot of communication."

The Conversation

question3: "how can we improve?"

bureaucracy/administrative systems

- De-centralize control (ex: let me administer myself my state funding)
- Analyze/describe all our functions; we'd find ways of streamlining; would empower, create new opportunity for strategic planning, give chance to know each other better, more teambuilding
- Any streamlining “one stop” we can do will improve (ex: permits, etc.)
- Coordinated City Services Task Force has been positive; cuts through bureaucracy, and citizens see that and are aware of how responsive we are
- Collection of refuse/recycling can be more efficient (ex: can co-mingle refuse and pick up with fewer crews and sort at transfer station)
- Get more of business that other sanitation departments are getting within Berkeley -- go out and ask
- Fix inter-face problem of Information Systems between finance and billing departments
- Project Management needed -- so things are not “lost in space” -- a standard method in the City is needed ...projects “vaporize” when individuals are out [per management turnover, etc.]
- Encouraged by team building we're working on - but need better project management with outside contractors (esp. with all new construction coming) so better hand-off to City's building maintenance workers; ex: need “as builts” blue prints
- Public Works customer service could be expanded to after normal business hours; answering service not adequate: use City employee in Public Works dispatch
- Use one stop phone connection to services for citizens (ex: Anchorage, Alaska -- one call connects to utilities/housing services)
- Have field staff observe in the field and make referrals more
- Simplify the rules: too much time defending/explaining esoteric archaic rules
- We keep multiplying the categories/the choices; the assumption is that more choices produces greater satisfaction; it's not necessarily better if more choices

“De-centralize
control”

“Simplify rules”

- Berkeley/Alameda County fire departments' consolidation
- Ditch a system a month, like you did with the Project Management System - and when City Manager does so, maybe department heads will follow
- Volunteer to spend a day with the City Manager - and for City Manager to spend a day on our job
- Contract process needs to be changed
- Break down department barriers and rules; best work we do is across departments
- Have supervisors meet across department [lines] to discuss problems and learn about each other's departments
- Have to work smarter; maximize resources working together inter-departmentally

"Break down department barriers and rules; best work we do is across departments."

referrals

- Change referral system:
 - simplify response; too many layers
 - give to departments to handle
 - encourage more direct contact with citizens (phone)
 - give people responsibility to fix it themselves
- Audit the referral process -- show and publicize the costs of processing referrals for some big projects
- We need more up front willingness to say no; if we got more no's up front, we'd have fewer expensive yes's at the end
- Identify a designated "problem solver" in each department/division; like an ombudsman role; or like BPD "Area Coordinators" ("buck stops with me when a problem is assigned to me")

"Buck stops with me when a problem is assigned to me"

council/priorities

- We need to move into South/West Berkeley and beautify, improve crime situations; something needs to happen in West Berkeley that's not!
- Add "workplan impact" and "policy impact" on reports to Council (not just financial impact)

- Take some time with Council to share staff feelings from these Town Halls.
- Set priorities and communicate them throughout the organization
- There needs to be some bringing together of diverse interests - and help so each can see the contradictions [when setting policy]
- Have (financial) impact report- like EIR's - go to Council in response to their proposals

**"Add 'workplan impact' and 'policy impact'
on reports to Council."**

citizen involvement

- Ask tenants to help with inspections of rental units
- Roundtable conferences with City departments and business community re: sharing resources
- Need to be able to analyze the community and show that we are working on things that people care about (and then they'll come)
- With welfare "reform," greater needs for low income community -- much of what is needed can be staffed with volunteers
- Responsibility of citizenship; need to address or demands will explode
- Follow the example of Community Policing and collaborate more with citizens
- Use citizen volunteers - to help with community education and to help with problem solving (vs. just being critical of us)
- Human power of UC students underutilized; need help to tap those resources; internships; etc.
- Do we really know the citizens [as a whole]?

**"Do we really know
the citizens
[as a whole]?"**

Squeaky wheel gets the oil. How about getting at the others?

- Dilute the current 'community involvement' culture by finding new and better ways to get citizens involved; commissions are not great at rising above the lowest common denominator
- Need to simplify and make [our processes] more democratic; caters now to squeaky wheel -- resulting in some individual "powers in their own right";
- [We] will get people to participate when big decisions are to be made, but when planning process elongated, brings out just the "process junkies"

public information

- Educate public about the current reality of resources
- Inform residents about what departments do; and use media better to do so
- Need a Public Information Officer (PIO)
- Pick top ten problems that Councilmembers hear about from citizens; spend time with Council to show them what we do in these areas (situation/process/etc.) for background understanding
- People honestly don't know what we do; teach citizens about it (e.g., BPD Citizens Academy).

"People don't honestly know what we do."

organizational environment/culture

- Set standards of behavior (e.g., open mike)
- Model of partnership vs. hierarchy; difficult but worth striving to have
- Need a sense/agreement on what we're trying to achieve
- Balance technology and humanity
- Do more pre-planning; be more pro-active
- Finish what you start (ex. early retirement study)
- Berkeley is well known internationally; need to improve our image; be more entrepreneurial to get more cash to do the great things we want to do.
- Create places where you can work with a passion -- "with my heart"; it helps when your spirit is in it
- Identify problems, reach solutions, apply solution and evaluate; don't spend all the time at the complaining stage; once conclusions made, people [should] commit to really trying it for period of time
- I like this forum - 'second bullet' of the City Managers vision has to be the cornerstone : Respect "and support for each other..." ; start at home first; need a foundation
- Look at doing work differently; for example: longer work days and a shorter work week; or spread work over 6-7 days a week versus 5 days a week, with extended service hours/days when citizens can contact us.



-Have to find time for staff to be together every day

accountability/responsibility

-Be personally willing to investigate how to get assistance for citizen and get back to them

--Management needs to deal with and document 'bad apples' (both employees and management), with unions

-Unions need to assure employees are treated fairly, but management should still deal with non-performing employees; unions would accept accountability if it was across the board

**"Take the initiative
and call the citizen"**

--Hold management accountable for how they spend

-Start accountability at the top; [less management does not necessarily = more productivity], but we need good management

-Accountability and evaluation throughout the chain of command

-Why not take the initiative and call the citizen (rather than wait for letter to get old)

teams

-Create more motivated, small (3-10 person) cross-dept., cross-functional teams

-[Teamwork] has a lot to say with whether you think you can get something done...It

shapes expectations (notes example of 5 depts. needing and getting expedited action from Finance Dept. for an inter-dept. training session)

**"Work as a team
City-wide"**

-Work as a team City-wide

personnel practices

-Rotate assignments (e.g., within Public Works)

-Fill grant positions; hire justified vacancies; lift freeze

-"Community First", but also need to take care of employee needs

-Employee evaluations of supervisors/managers; 360 degree evaluations

-Allow reduced hours work week; let people take less pay by working less hours

- Early retirement
- Consider improving benefits for those about to retire
- Select individuals for telecommuting
- The 5th floor should take a survey of employees about how they feel about ideas that might assure A job, if not THEIR current job with the City (e.g., job shares; skills they have; etc.)
- Need incentives for employees to suggest improvements
- With no lay off/bumping policy, need better flexible placement to place individuals where they have skills
- Have more comparable analyst and administrative tracks
- Reduce some classification MQ's as in private sector, so high school grads could be eligible
- Need better recruitment of minorities (blacks); especially to reach the youth earlier through recruitment
- One stop shop for employees; a good idea ... no place to get support; not management/union, but for one on ones; get past "we/they"
- Idea of "rewarding" employee suggestions that produce savings (incentives like a day off, monthly suggestion box prizes of \$200 - \$500, etc.)
- Be flexible and re-train
- Tweak personnel system

"Need
better
flexible
placement"

budget process

- Let's start budget process -- as team-- earlier, with more time
- Need to strike a balance between neighborhood and City-wide issues (neighborhood and City-wide budgets)
- Eliminate outside vendors
- Limit/cap "free" [refuse] services
- Increase revenue by increased auditing of business licenses
- Do less with less
- Need an action plan to create priorities as soon as budget is over; set milestones and mark progress from year to year
- Planning process should be year round - in teams in departments; reduce control

- systems to create the time to do this
- City needs to be pro-active about revenues; industry lost per high taxes
- Like you [City Manager] deal with us - show the public the fiscal picture, costs, all that we are doing
- End secrecy - especially re: budget; "State of the City" and Berkeley Matters messages from the City Manager would help
- Document, evaluate, and explain better what we are doing and why (note lack of follow up on last year's 'program inventory')
- Increase franchise tax (ex: refuse collection)
- Need to invest to save -- ex: grant writers to bring in money for drug treatment
- Cut some programs, instead of continuing to cut our department (per across the board cuts)
- Draw new businesses back - especially in West End
- City ought to go after those people [who illegally dump] and generate revenue through fines; enforce more; we can identify the people and report them, but no follow up; Berkeley is a "free ride" -- Concord, Walnut Creek, enforce!
- Run a tight financial ship
- Present plans to the workers so we can see where we're going
- More marketing of Berkeley businesses
- Pedestrian malls should be considered -- ex. Telegraph Avenue, Fourth Street -- get people out of cars
- Avoid cuts in departments/divisions that have most direct contact with the public. (example - HHS, SWM)
- Salary freeze to avoid cuts
- “Re-tooling” concept a good one and can develop; good to point out need to dedicate resources.
- Furloughs

leadership/management/supervision

- City Manager needs to stick around [need for continuity]

- Office of Economic Development - more focus to go out to other cities to attract business
- Need to address the perception/frustration that things are not getting finished; identify specific things that can focus on to show we're getting things completed/accomplished; show progress
- Re: City Manager's 'I got your message' memo : at first some action , but then the 'freeze' followed, etc; please revisit that memo and see where you are
- Push this dialogue down to the departments
- Develop and promote a vision of the City
- Set priorities, follow up, and stick by them
- Management needs to support risk-taking, where employees may be trying to do the right thing, but maybe not the right way
- Be realistic -- when employees morale is low, beware of raising expectations - take care to identify specific steps we can do each year!
- Evaluate managers with input from employees who are supervised

**"Push this [Town Hall] dialogue
down to the departments."**

employee participation

- Involve more "practitioners" in planning
- Like with Permit Center planning: Get employees and citizens involved working together to learn procedures and improve; communicate with co-workers; be accountable to citizens; and take action.
- Employee participation in hiring department heads
- Incorporate front line input into system (like with Town Halls) that is listened to and acted on
- Take employee suggestions and act on them
- Empowerment; getting clout down to the project manager level

**"Incorporate front
line input into
system"**

training

- Training needs to be a high priority
- Training in standards
- Training for Bds. & Commissions in how to handle public

- More cross training and rotation of positions in departments to avoid burnout
- Managers should be taught how to run meetings - i.e., who needs to be there? what outcome of meeting is expected? who handles assignments?
- Training re: what the City offers; roles
- Need greater flexibility and training (if we can't expand the number of employees)
- Broaden opportunities for training and self-improvement
- Management training - ongoing and mandatory
- I've been with the City 16 years, and just a couple years ago I participated in leadership training -- and that helped me feel more connected; shared frustrations and goals with other staff I never knew before -- camaraderie is not encouraged enough in the City
- Make "effective supervisor/leadership" training a priority; training for managers about issues of change
- Train supervisors to make performance evaluations more meaningful
- Lots of people don't really know what it means to "take risks" and "be entrepreneurial"; need more education about new form of administration; need professional help to do this

"Need greater flexibility and training"

- Provide training to managers on budgets; inter-personal communications, etc.
- Managers need continuous training -- especially managers who work with the community...many managers aren't out in the community and don't know what's happening.
- Be a provider of training for other agencies and charge them (ex.: Bayer - 250 seat training center)
- Training in doing work programs
- All could benefit from training/hints re: how to handle irate citizens on the phone; outspoken, diverse community lets you know in no certain terms when we screw up
- Continue "Day timer" [managing time]; "cost of quality;" customer service, [training modules]

communications

- Use local corporation resources (ex: Sybase); bargain with them

- Keep employees more informed in general
- Be more "community friendly" when citizens call to get help
- Need a "public information officer" and report out more positive information about City in Berkeley Voice, etc
- Need employee newsletter (Berkeley Matters not adequate)
- Have a City center for 24 hours service of all departments ; to do so, we need to work better across the departments
- Get information out at sites where people come for relief (not just at City Hall; at BOSS, etc.)
- Have a column re: "complaint of the week" -- and respond; show what we have to deal with
- Don't disseminate Town Halls summary by just use e-mail and Berkeley Matters!
- Address fragmentation with one stop/resource center approach --uniform communication/connection of department/staff
- Need better sense of resources – wherever you go it should feel like a one stop shop
- Have "resource center" be a place where people "can just talk"
- Directory : "community resource guide"/pamphlet, organized by need; not by departments
- Use other existing resource guides, too (ex. BOSS; Oakland Red Cross); we have so many hidden resources; everyone making up their own resource guides
- Greater use of communications technology; E-mail for everyone
- Signage to help direct citizens in City Hall; Information Booth in Lobby
- Need to have a dialogue with Council. If Councilmember observed a department in operation, we can then consider suggestions they might have. But also need to stop saying we can, when we can't; and we need to acknowledge when we make mistakes.
- We need to know more about what we each do so we can better help the public and make appropriate referrals
- Use brown bag lunches (re: each department's services; funding; staffing qualifications; etc.) and B-TV (cable access TV) to develop more cohesion in the organization
- More dialogue across department lines; Coordinated City Services Task Force a framework for that cross-department dialogue
- Do outreach with employees to describe what they do and the value they bring to the community

"Wherever you go it
should feel like a one
stop shop"

City Manager Response:

Proposed Action Plan

FISCAL YEAR 1-1998

1. City Manager Workplan to Council
2. Initiate management performance contracts at the department heads level
3. Develop a communications strategy
4. Explore options for Public Information Officer function
5. City Manager monthly reports
6. Initial Council Agenda process improvements/Council report changes w/ "work impact" and "policy impact" sections
7. Review the referral system and move to a Neighborhood Service concept including the idea of a central city infoline
8. City services directory
9. Streamline contracts/purchasing
10. Develop training plan: including customer service; teams; effective supervision (workplans, standards, performance evaluations); inter-personal communications: facilitation; coaching; project management; effective meetings
11. Target Re-Tooling funds to continuous improvement efforts
12. Expand employee involvement (ex: budget process, training plans, etc.)
13. Explore options for Environmental Services coordination
14. Benchmarking, service indicators with budget presentation
15. Revise City's "customer service" survey forms; conduct 2nd annual community (telephone) survey on services
17. Initiate first stage of fiscal and personnel management changes to provide more line level responsibility and accountability
18. Report back to employees on progress

FISCAL YEARS 2-5

- Employee Town Halls II
- Learning Center
- Council priority setting process
- New means for citizen engagement/implement Neighborhood Services concept
- Expanded staff access to and upgraded computer technology
- Improve performance evaluations; consider 360 degree evaluations, etc.
- Create new performance incentives; ex: gainsharing
- Further develop training: Measurement/Evaluation; large group processes
- Personnel system changes; less rigidity
- Neighborhood resource centers
- Renovated Civic Center
- Entrepreneurial support service structure
- Community visioning process
- Citizenship academy

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